

The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, June 26. 1695.

Quest. 1. **W**hat's the meaning of the word Nature?

Ans. We understand by it the settled course of things, or fixed order of causes and effects, never altered without a miracle.

Quest. 2. Does not this prove the Divisibility of the Soul, that several senses, as seeing, hearing, &c. shou'd affect the Soul at one time, the consequence of which seems to be that the Soul shou'd be affected in several parts.

Ans. We think it does not in the least prove it, nor is there any manner of consequence between the matter of Fact, and the conclusion that's drawn from it; For tho several outward objects may strike at the same time on the senses, and thence be convey'd to the Brain and the Fancy, yet the Acts of the Soul when it reflects on those Images, must needs be successive, as any will find who make the tryal on their own mind.

Quest. 3. A certain Jew, having a violent passion for a young woman who is a Quaker, promis'd her marriage, on which she consented to his desires, soon after he fell in Love with another, and by the same promise prevail'd so far with her as to serve her as he did the former; the latter of which now proves with child by him. Your opinion is desired whether of the two he ought to marry, the former having much the advantage both in Fortune and Beauty.

Ans. We shou'd say he had done like a Jew, were there not too many who wou'd fain be called Christians, that are often guilty of as ill, or baser actions. For his falling in Love, as he calls it, with both of these one after the other, 'tis such a Love as Brutes have for the whole Herd, a very Heathen having defin'd Love better, that as often as our mind carries us to that which is good, 'tis Love, otherwise Concupiscence: But nothing can be said to be good which leads a man into wickedness, misery, Calamity, and Repentance. For this Terragant Israelite, tho we can't suppose he values the Laws of our Saviour, yet he might have had some respect to those of the Country where he lives, at least of common Truth, and Honesty, which is plant'd in the Hearts of all mankind. However all he can now do is to marry the first, as he is oblig'd by more than promise, and since he can't the 2d too without ventring the swing, to provide for her, whom he has ruin'd, as well as the Child, of which he's the ungracious Father.

Quest. 4. A young Lady being in Love with a Gentleman of a mean Fortune, her own being two thousand pound, pray which is most to blame, she for falling in Love, or he for refusing so good an offer, the Gentlewoman being virtuous and well accomplish'd, but he neither handsome nor good humour'd.

Ans. 'Tis very hard to require a reason for Love, which all know depends upon fancy and Inclination, nor is it much easier to tell why the Spark shou'd refuse her, unless because he has as little wit as beauty, or good nature.

Quest. 5. I observe the generality of Seamen, especially the younger sort, are more opiniated and rash than other men: I have a Son and a Kinsman under my care, both of that profession, and of good parts, yet very subject to this common failing, tho I can make neither of them sensible of the Folly, or Inconvenience of such a practice. I desire your opinion whence this

proceeds, and what arguments I may use to convince them of this failing.

Ans. 'Tis not only Seamen, but most others that are inclin'd in their youth to conceit and confidence, proceeding generally from want of experience and consideration: This may be more eminent in some Sailors, from their way of Living, remote from Conversation, and in a World by themselves: Besides this, they are often expos'd to danger, the frequent escaping of which renders 'em fearless: However, if they are men of sense, Age, good Company, and observation, how ill such a behaviour becomes others, may in time reclaim 'em; tho after all, for a private Souldier to have a good opinion of himself mayn't be such a Fault as 'twou'd be in another person, especially in a General, for the persuasion that I can beat another, oftentimes helps very much towards my beating him.

Quest. 6. A person of Quality has a Servant, a Gardiner, that was born deaf and dumb, another had a maid-servant that lay under the same misfortune: However, they were marry'd, and have several Children that have all their senses. Pray resolve these following questions concerning 'em.

1. Whether the abovesaid matrimony was Lawful, according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England?

2. Whether if it shou'd happen that these persons shou'd break any of the Ten Commands commit Rebellion, or break any of the Laws of the Land, they cou'd be guilty of sin, since they know not the Laws either of God, or Man?

Ans. For the first question, such a marriage must be Lawful, if the consent of parties be publickly testify'd in the best manner they are able to do it. Nor can the Church require more than is possible, of any person, having provided for ordinary cases, but leaving such extraordinary to the prudence of her Governors.

To the second, they can't be, we conceive, oblig'd by any Law which they have no notice of, nor can possibly attain it. Tho something of the Law of Nature must be written in their Hearts, since they are reasonable Creatures, as well as others. And if they improve this well, God is able to let 'em know more by ways best known to himself, tho perhaps unknown to us, such persons having had oftentimes such notions as wou'd puzzle the wisest man to give an account how they came by 'em; tho it must be confess'd, having nothing to divert their observation, they have generally strange apprehensions, and very great memories, and may be taught, we are apt to believe, many useful things, as well as it may be most of the Laws of the Land which concern themselves; and those which they know, doubtless they may break, and be liable to punishment for't as well as other persons.

Quest. 7. I beg the opinion and advice of your Society in a case of great importance both to the Soul and Body of the person concern'd, who is yet virtuous and innocent, she has the misfortune to be passionately belov'd by a marry'd man, and has been so for some years. He's parted from his own wife on suspicion of Adultery, tho the crime can't be fully prov'd against her: The Circumstances of the Man are of such a Nature, and his Importunities so pressing, that it must be by some powerful help from Heaven that the ruine of my Friend is prevented. He presses her earnestly to mar-

ry him, all his attempts having prov'd unsuccessful, and if deny'd any longer vows to force her into some remote place, be the Event never so fatal: In this exigency your Charitable advice is desired: If she were satisfy'd ~~was~~ ^{was} no sin, the Censure of the Vulgar will give her no concern, and according to your Judgment she'll regulate her self in this matter.

Ans. We must beg your pardon if we believe the person concern'd will scarce stay for our answer, for if she's once come to Parley, and to desire she might yield, she has but one step more to make, (it may be not that now,) towards her ruine, and we are the more afraid our advice will be too late because she's already past Fame and Reputation, for what else are the Censures of the publick when justly apply'd? However if it beent now in vain, we desire her to remember that she can be no better then the present wife is reputed, if she marry him who is not legally and justly separated from his own wife, and that so as to have liberty to marry another, which he cannot be, that we know of, by any but by the supreme authority of the Nation, which has given such a liberty where the case has been clear and notorious: Till he can do this, or his wife fairly dies, your friend, (or your self) pretend in vain to virtue if she does not resist him; which it seems there's no way to do but absolutely to fly from him, and if London be not wide enough, sure England is, to hide her self, which she may easily do if she trusts but some one firm friend with her removal without taking her leave, unless she has a mind to be stoppt, or giving any intimation of her Intention. Nor can we doubt but that if things come to extremity, she might have Protection from the Magistrate against him, and whatever he threatens, finding the persons easiness, or weakness, he'll be a little afraid of the punishment of a Rape, and scarce venture on hanging, tho he wou'd it seems on damnation. Tho by the way, this one wou'd think were enough to open her Eyes to see what a sort of Love he has for her: True Love is humble, patient, submissive, even in the greatest Monarch; but there's something else, much uglier, that too often steals its name, and makes it a vizard for its own black Face, that's furious and raging, and set on Fire of Hell. To conclude, she now knows her danger, and we think the only way to avoid it, which if she does, we have our End, if not, we have done our duty.

Quest. 8. On last—Eve nine others besides my self went into a Church-porch, with an expectation of seeing those which shou'd dye that year, but about Eleven a Clock, I was so affraid that I left 'em, and all the nine did positively affirm to me that about an Hour after, the Church-doors flying open, the minister, (who it seems was very much troubled that Night in his sleep) with such as shou'd dye that year, did appear in order. Which persons they nam'd to me, and they appear'd then all very healthful, but six of 'em dy'd in six weeks after in the very same order that they appear'd. The truth of which I'm very well assur'd of, having been my self present at some of their Burials, and know them all: About two months after I left Cambridge, so that I'm ignorant of what has since happen'd; but I'm very sure of the Truth of what I've writ, tho unable to give any solution of the manner of it, which I desire from your Society.

Ans. First, for Fact, this being suppos'd to have happen'd some time since, (as we find by the date of the Letter) the querist may by this be certain of all the rest which were nam'd by his Companions, but if he wou'd satisfy others too, he's desir'd to give us the Name of the Church, and if not his own, and theirs who sat up and saw this dreadful sight, yet at least of the persons who dy'd the ensuing year. *Glauil*, if we mistake not, has a Revelation of the same nature; however, there is a known story of a Gentle-

mans house in the North of England, which almost every body there have heard, and none question, and which exactly agrees with that here mention'd. But after all, supposing the Fact to be true, how shou'd we give account of what's so unaccountable as the Transactions of the other world? It seems beyond the power of the Devil, or perhaps any Created Spirit, to foretel infallibly, the Death of any person, except they have a particular Commission to do it. Known unto God, it's true, are all his works, and there's no doubt but he orders all things, and knows what he has order'd, as well in regular course of nature, as otherwise, but why he shou'd reveal this, or permit it to be reveal'd, we must profess our ignorance, tho that he has done so we are certain, in the case of *Saul*, *Abaziah*, and others. However, we think 'tis a dangerous and unlawful Curiosity to try things of this nature, some having, 'tis said, fallen asleep, and their own Images gone by at such watchings as the Relation mentions.

Advertisements.

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